

to use a National Guard Commando Solo C-130 to broadcast signals into Cuba. So they have been using Defense Department funds to broadcast signals to Cuba that are jammed. It is not enough, apparently, to broadcast signals from a big old aerostat balloon that the Cuban people cannot see, now we have a highly sophisticated C-130. And now even that is not enough. Now they want to buy a new airplane in this budget.

My hope is there are enough people in the Congress who understand waste is waste, not Republican waste or Democratic waste. Just waste. When it does not stand the test of common sense, and it does not even stand the basic laugh test with this kind of spending, my hope is Members of the Senate will join and decide this is the sort of thing that ought to be abolished.

One final point. I don't come here to try to abolish Radio Marti, although I don't think it is necessary. Radio Marti is broadcasting radio signals into Florida. They are often not jammed. The Cuban people receive them. I have been to Cuba and talked to the dissidents. They receive Radio Marti's broadcast. I don't propose we abolish it. But they do not see the Television Marti broadcast. We still have expensive studio space, pay expensive salaries, have aerostat balloons and now airplanes to broadcast it, despite the fact we know it is a complete, total waste of money. We know better than this. We ought to understand it and abolish it in this year's budget submitted by the President.

Let me mention one other area of spending that desperately needs to be abolished in this budget. It is not giant; it is \$8 million. But take \$11 million for Fat Albert and the new airplane and Television Marti and \$8 million here and there, and pretty soon we have a significant amount of money.

Last year and this year, the President recommended we build additional nuclear weapons—begin planning the design—and they especially talked about the earth-penetrating bunker buster nuclear weapon. Last year, the Congress said no. The President put it in his budget again this year. He wants \$8 million to revive the project to create new earth-penetrating bunker buster nuclear weapons. The implication of creating a designer nuclear weapon is, we do not have enough nuclear weapons at the moment and they are perfectly usable if we find someone crawled in a cave or carrying on operations in a cave that we want to get to that we cannot get to.

If a country like ours is to send a signal to the rest of the world that we do not have enough nuclear weapons, that we believe we should design more nuclear weapons, that designer nuclear weapons make sense, and that nuclear weapons are usable, that is exactly the wrong signal to send to anyone in this world. The exclusive opportunity and requirement for us is to send a signal

to the world that nuclear weapons should never again be used in anger under any circumstance.

We have thousands of them. The loss of one would cause an apoplectic seizure among the cities in our country. There was a time when it was thought one nuclear weapon from the Russian arsenal was stolen and it caused a great seizure among intelligence organizations and others because were a terrorist able to steal one nuclear weapon and threaten to detonate one nuclear weapon in a major American city, we are not talking about 100 deaths or 1,000 deaths, we are talking about hundreds of thousands of deaths. The loss of one nuclear weapon would be devastating if it got into the hands of terrorists.

We have thousands and thousands of nuclear weapons in this country. The estimate is somewhere—of course, it is classified—the estimate range of the Russian stockpile is somewhere perhaps in the area of 15,000 nuclear weapons; ours is something less than that but not much less than that. We have thousands and thousands and thousands of nuclear weapons between us and the Russians, with some other countries who have now joined that club who have nuclear weapons but are fewer in number.

The suggestion somehow that we do not have enough nuclear weapons, that we need more nuclear weapons, and that nuclear weapons are usable, especially if we have an issue with people holding up in a cave or strategic materials holed up in a cave, that we cannot get to that, so we can lob in an earth penetrator, a designer bunker buster nuclear weapon, and that we can use it—that message from this country is a devastating message that sets back the opportunity for this country to play a leadership role in stopping the spread of nuclear weapons everywhere, making sure we do not ever have testing of nuclear weapons anywhere. It is our job, our responsibility, to be a world leader on this issue.

Given the new reality of the war on terrorism and what terrorists would like to do with respect to weapons of mass destruction, if our country does not try to do everything humanly possible to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and make people understand it is unthinkable that nuclear weapons will once again be used on this Earth, then we will have failed. Our children and grandchildren will almost certainly see at some point an expansion of those countries that have nuclear weapons, the stealing of a nuclear weapon by a terrorist organization and the detonation of a nuclear weapon in a major city in this world and perhaps in this country. We must exert every possible effort to see that does not happen.

Sending a budget that says we need to begin work on designing additional nuclear weapons, new nuclear weapons, and nuclear weapons that are designed for specific purposes such as pene-

trating the Earth and busting caves, with the implication that it is clearly something we could, should, and would use under certain circumstances, is exactly the wrong approach and a dangerous message from this country, especially.

The burden falls on our shoulders to be a leader in stopping the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It retards rather than advances those interests to see from this administration talk in some circles that is reckless and recommendations that are counterproductive to suggest we ought to begin, again, building nuclear weapons.

In addition to this recommendation to spend \$8 million to revive the project of a nuclear earth-penetrator bunker buster, there is talk of testing nuclear weapons, resuming testing of nuclear weapons which, of course, then would be a green light for others to say, if the United States is going to test, we are going to test.

My hope is we can understand the profound danger that exists if we do not take this proliferation issue seriously and if we do not immediately assume the mantle of responsibility to be the world leader to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. This is not about a nuisance. This is not about a threat. This is about a potential catastrophe unlike anything we have discussed or thought about with respect to weapons of mass destruction in the hands of the wrong people. That is why the responsibility is such an ominous responsibility that falls on our shoulders. It is one that we can meet, in my judgment, but we have to be clear thinking.

We need a President and a Congress, together, that will reject the approach that says we should begin building additional nuclear weapons or begin researching and talking about the need for additional weapons we can use for designer purposes.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I rise today because this Senate needs to act now to save our children's future. We all know that Social Security is one of this country's greatest success stories in the 20th century. But why? Is it the hundreds of thousands of elderly who were saved from poverty or is it the millions of seniors who have retired with the stability of their monthly Social Security checks?

Actually, there are two reasons. For me, the first is an Army sergeant who served in World War II and went to the

European Theater. The second is the woman from Alabama he married. Although they were never a family of great means, they worked hard, paid into the system all their lives, and got the money they were owed from Social Security when they retired.

Of course, those two people I am referring to were my parents. It is because of what Social Security did for them and their friends that we all know it is a success story. I am sure millions of Americans feel the same way.

Today, I would like to make absolutely sure Social Security is the same success for my children as it was for my parents.

Let's get one thing out of the way right up front: This debate is about saving the future, not defacing the past. Every senior who now receives Social Security benefits or who is going to receive them within the next 10 years will get full benefits for their entire—their entire—retirement. They deserve that piece of mind, and they have it. This Congress will not touch Social Security in any way for Americans 55 or older, period. This debate is not about seniors today. It is about our children tomorrow.

I said Social Security was one of the greatest accomplishments of the 20th century. But this is the 21st century. We need to strengthen and save Social Security for today's workers. If we do not act now, this system, born out of the New Deal, will become a bad deal for our children and grandchildren.

When Social Security was created in 1935, it was still common to see a Ford Model T on the road. Today's young adults drive hybrid electric cars while listening to their I-Pods. A system designed for the 1930s just does not fit the 21st century.

Something must be done and done now. Some critics say there is no crisis; that we do not have to do anything about this problem, even though we can all see it coming; that we can put it off until later. Their response to this healthy debate on the future of Social Security has been to poke their fingers in their ears and bury their heads in the sand.

Well, that is simply not acceptable. We were elected to get things accomplished for America, not to mark time around here. Someday I will pass this desk, right here—the very same desk used by Henry Clay—along to another Senator from Kentucky. I do not intend to pass this problem along as well.

That is why I applaud the President's vision and courage in tackling this important but certainly tough issue. He deserves our gratitude for sparking this national discussion on saving Social Security. You might not agree with the various options laid out by the President—that is fine—but you have to agree that action ought to be taken.

In 1935, most women did not work outside the home. Today, about 60 percent do. In 1935, the average American

did not typically live long enough to collect Social Security benefits. Today, our life expectancy is 77 years. In 1935, there were 16 Americans in the workforce for every retiree collecting benefits. Today, there are only slightly more than three.

And before the next President is sworn in, the baby boomers will begin to retire, creating four new retirees for each new worker over the next 30 years. Yet benefits are scheduled to rise dramatically over the next few decades.

What that means is the current system will begin to pay out more money than it takes in within just a very few years—by the time today's kindergarteners graduate from high school. At that point, the Government will have to borrow money or raise taxes to keep up with the benefits. When today's workers retire in 2042, the system will be insolvent.

If we do nothing until then—just keep putting it off—the only solution will be to borrow massive amounts of money, impose crippling taxes, or drastically cut benefits, or all three.

So at a minimum, we need to repair the system to keep it afloat. But we can do, if we chose to, a lot more than that. There is a lot of room for improvement in Social Security. We owe our children the most financially sound system possible. They will have paid into it their entire working lives. They deserve to be protected. I know a lot of younger people consider the portion of their paycheck that goes to Social Security to be like any other tax—money they will never see again. More young people believe they will see a UFO than that they will see their own Social Security benefits. That is how confident they are that it will be there for them in the future. That tells me we are letting down our children and grandchildren. They can see that Washington has done a terrible job managing their investment. Social Security pays out about 1 cent per dollar paid in, but IRAs and money markets pay on average seven times more.

I have a message for every younger worker who is about to enter or who has just entered the prime of working life: The money that goes into Social Security is not the Government's money. It is your money. You paid for it. You paid for it with sweat and toil to provide for yourself and your family. If the Government didn't take that money, you would have spent it on yourself or your spouse or a parent or a child or put it in the bank. The point is, it would have been your decision.

There is a way we can strengthen and save Social Security, still guarantee that it will fulfill its promises in the future, and also give younger workers the power to decide how best to grow their money and build a nest egg for retirement. We do that with voluntary personal retirement accounts. Voluntary personal retirement accounts are the best way to ensure that Social Security remains strong for our chil-

dren and grandchildren. The money in these accounts will grow over time at a greater rate than what the current system now offers. The nest egg they build will be theirs and Government can never take it away. Most importantly, Americans will be able to pass on the money in these accounts to their children or grandchildren. It is a smarter, fairer system.

I hear some of my colleagues say: People will waste the money in these accounts, playing the lottery or betting on horses at the track. Take it from this Senator from a horse racing State, such claims are nonsense and only meant as scare tactics. This Congress and President Bush will only pass legislation that will save and strengthen Social Security once and for all. That means we will set careful guidelines for these personal accounts. The money will only be invested in conservative bonds and stock funds. We will keep fees and transaction costs low. We will install appropriate safeguards, and we will phase in personal accounts gradually over a period of time.

Voluntary personal retirement accounts are very similar to the Thrift Savings Plan that every Federal worker, like all of us, has access to. If we can offer this deal to Federal employees, including Senators, why can't we offer it to all Americans?

The accounts are also similar to an IRA or a 401(k) plan. So most Americans will already know how a personal account will work. They are easy to understand. They will be completely voluntary, so if anybody is uncomfortable with it, they don't have to do it. No one who does not want a personal account will be forced to have one.

On top of the voluntary personal retirement accounts, we need to do more to save and strengthen Social Security. The President said he is open to all reasonable ideas. So are all of us. But it is crucial that we tackle the problem now and not continue to kick the can down the road. Democrats and Republicans are going to have to work together to do this.

I have spoken before of my hopes that this 109th Congress will be able to work together in a spirit of bipartisanship, and we certainly got off to a good start last week with the class action bill. I believe we should start now by rolling up our sleeves and working together.

A few days ago the new chairman of the Democratic National Committee said:

I hate the Republicans and everything they stand for.

Well, it is pretty tough to sit across the table from somebody with that kind of an attitude. But I think most Democrats recognize that attitude is not productive and I don't think it is the view of Democrats in the Senate. I have already heard several of my Democratic friends say Social Security does, indeed, have a problem, and we do need to do something about it. That is good. Denying there is a problem is denying the obvious. We need their voices

in this great national discussion. They recognize that when it comes to Social Security, what Republicans stand for is the same thing Democrats stand for—preserving the system for today's seniors and restoring its promise for our children and for our grandchildren.

Social Security was there for my parents. It will be there for me. But I have three daughters. They are all grown up and have blossomed into accomplished young women. I don't want them to question whether there will be anything left when they retire. We should not let a system that provided so spectacularly for my parents and for me to die due to our reluctance to tackle big, tough issues. We need to restore the system so it is fair for everyone. Working in a bipartisan manner, we have the opportunity to do that.

An increasing number of Senators on the other side of the aisle are acknowledging that there is a problem, and it seems to me a good place for us all to start is to acknowledge the obvious, which is that unless we address this problem, we are going to have a serious problem later, leading to massive tax increases or unacceptably large benefit cuts for our children.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I rise to echo the words that were just spoken by my colleague, the Senator from Kentucky, distinguished majority whip, with respect to an issue that is incredibly important to the Senate and to the people of this country. The issue is the future of Social Security. The program as we know it today will not last. It is headed for bankruptcy. That is why President Bush and others have done the responsible thing—to begin to raise the issue of reform.

The question before us is, How do we fix the system for our children and for our grandchildren? I would like to commend the Republicans and the Democrats who have acknowledged and agreed that a problem exists with the current system and that we can do better.

Going back to 1998, President Bill Clinton at that time called Social Security "a looming crisis" and then went on to detail the deep benefit cuts or massive payroll tax increases that would be required if nothing was done in the very immediate future.

It takes political courage for Members of both parties to be open to reform. Members of both parties have expressed their concern about the current system and about the possible improvements brought about by adding personal retirement accounts.

Social Security is an extremely complicated program. Sometimes it is difficult to grasp numbers in the trillions and dates that are decades from now. That is why it is helpful to tackle this issue in a way we can all understand. For me, the decision to find a fix for Social Security became clear when I thought about two extremely impor-

tant people in my own life—my father Harold and my daughter Brittany.

My father Harold Thune turned 85 this last December. He is a retired teacher, still living in the town I grew up in, Murdo, SD, with my wonderful mother who was the school librarian. My father also served his country as a decorated World War II fighter pilot. He is the essence of hard work and sacrifice. He has put in his time. I would never do anything to the Social Security benefit that he has earned. Because my parents never struck it rich working for the Murdo public school system, they depend upon their Social Security check. Many other retired Americans are in similar situations.

For one-third of Americans over the age of 65, Social Security benefits constitute 90 percent of their total income. As President Bush outlined his principles regarding Social Security reform last month in the State of the Union, he made it very clear that Social Security benefits would remain unchanged for anyone 55 years of age and older. This includes everyone in retirement and those nearing retirement age.

The system will be there for those who have paid into the system with a lifetime of hard work. No politician is proposing to cut benefits from my father's generation. Despite what we might hear from those who are defending the status quo, reform proposals work to solve the problem for younger workers, not take away the benefits from America's seniors.

That brings me to another important person in my life who has helped me better understand the need to fix Social Security. That is my oldest daughter Brittany. Brittany is 17 years old, and she is a junior in high school at Roosevelt High School in Sioux Falls, SD. Soon she will be entering the workforce. God willing, she will live a full life and reach retirement age in 2055. The Social Security trustees tell us that Social Security will no longer be able to pay full benefits by 2042, which is 13 years before my daughter Brittany could retire. That means even though Brittany will have paid into Social Security throughout her entire working life, the benefit promised to her will be cut by at least 25 percent according to the trustees.

This is the problem. If we do nothing, our children and grandchildren will not see the benefits that are promised to them. Brittany's benefits would be cut by at least 25 percent and probably more.

The reason this will happen is nothing more than simple demographics. When my father Harold was working in the 1950s, there were 16 workers for every Social Security beneficiary. Today there are only three workers per beneficiary. When my daughter retires, there will be two workers per beneficiary. The current pay-as-you-go Social Security system will not be able to handle the demographic shifts as the number of workers goes down and the number of retirees goes up.

A majority of younger voters understand there is a major problem with the current system for their generation. A *Newsweek* poll earlier this month found that 62 percent of those age 18 to 34 believe Social Security will not be there for them when they retire. Predictably, young Americans are frustrated with the prospect of spending a lifetime paying into a system that is destined for bankruptcy.

Some in Washington believe the best approach is to push that problem down the road; leave it for another Congress and for another President. I call that the "sweep it under the carpet" caucus. The American people sent us here to solve problems, and they expect us to do just that. To the sweep it under the carpet caucus, I say: Don't hide behind the status quo. Don't resort to the politics of fear and to scaring seniors. Your constituents and my constituents deserve better of their elected representatives.

If we do nothing, we are looking at a \$10 trillion shortfall. The longer we wait, the more expensive the fix will become. If we find a solution today, most experts agree it will most likely require \$1 trillion. One trillion today or \$10 trillion tomorrow—those are the options.

The predicament could be somewhat more manageable if we didn't start seeing problems until Brittany and her classmates start retiring. No, the looming crisis is coming much sooner than that. The Social Security trustees have told us that beginning in the year 2018, a little more than a decade from now, Social Security will begin paying out more in benefits than it is currently taking in.

This means we will need to start dramatically raising taxes, taking on massive loads of new debt, or accept severe benefit cuts in just 13 years to cover our promise to retirees.

We cannot wait on the sidelines and let this problem come to us. We need to face it and we need to attack it by putting all ideas on the table. We need to stop the quibbling, the partisan games, and political brinkmanship to find a solution that saves and strengthens Social Security for the future.

I ask my colleagues not to engage in futile bickering over individual ideas that may be put forward by some as part of the larger solution. My guess is, the solution will involve a number of ideas packaged together. Let's not dismiss or attack individual ideas as being inadequate before we have had a chance to assess their positive effect as part of a whole solution.

I remind my colleagues that we must put all the good ideas on the table. My two elderly parents and my two young daughters are constant reminders of what is at stake in this debate. We must ensure that today's seniors' benefits are rock solid and find a solution that fixes Social Security for the next generation that is just entering the workforce. We need Senators on both sides of the aisle to think not only

about what is good politics, but what is good for their children and their grandchildren.

As this debate engages, I urge my colleagues in the Senate to listen to the voices of the people around the country and to understand that they expect us to come here to solve problems. That is why they have elected us, not to kick it down the road, not to sweep it under the carpet for another Congress and another President to deal with. If we wait, the cost will be much higher and the American people, the taxpayers, will experience a much higher degree of pain. It is the taxpayers who are ultimately going to have to bear the burden for the lack of responsibility demonstrated by the leaders of today if we choose to do nothing.

I look forward to this debate as it gets underway. I urge my colleagues to acknowledge what is clear, what is obvious: We have a problem. The second thing that is clear and is obvious is that the American people sent us here to solve problems. Let's not sweep it under the carpet or kick it down the road; let's do the responsible thing and acknowledge this is a problem that needs to be fixed. The solution will require bipartisan support in this Chamber and in the House of Representatives. We must work together to save and strengthen Social Security not just for my father's generation but also for my daughters' generation.

I yield back the remainder of my time, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENSIGN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. MCCONNELL and Mr. BOND pertaining to the introduction of S. 414 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon is recognized.

ENERGY PRICES

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, last week, the Treasury Secretary, Mr. Snow, testified before the Senate Budget Committee that high energy prices act like a tax on consumers. Given that, what the Bush administration has called for is a huge tax on consumers throughout the Pacific Northwest. I am talking specifically about their proposal to require that people in our region pay \$2.5 billion more for energy in the days ahead because this administration wants to extract money from the Bonneville Power Administration's ratepayers above and beyond their costs.

I am very troubled about this proposal, particularly because when En-

ergy Secretary Bodman came to my office, I asked specifically about the administration's plan for Bonneville, and not just in the office, but when he came to the Senate Energy Committee for his confirmation hearing. Both times I was assured by Secretary-designate Bodman that he opposed proposals to privatize Bonneville. The assurances were provided just a couple of weeks before the Bush administration's budget was released with the plans that do, in fact, privatize Bonneville, for all practical purposes, by going to a different rate structure that seeks to extract money from Bonneville beyond its costs.

When I met with Dr. Bodman in my office, he was accompanied by Clay Sell, the White House energy adviser. I learned last night that Mr. Sell was well aware of the discussions within the administration that led to the Bonneville privatization proposal at the time Dr. Bodman was assuring me that he opposed privatization. In that meeting, and at his hearing, Dr. Bodman assured me that as far as he knew, the administration also opposed privatization. Clearly, that was not the case. Mr. Sell has since been nominated to be Deputy Secretary of Energy.

I have come to the floor today because the White House and the administration need to get the message. They cannot impose these devastating electricity rate increases on our region, first, without changing the law and, second, without an understanding that I and other Members from our region, Democrats and Republicans, will do everything we possibly can to prevent this misguided proposal to take huge amounts of dollars from our ratepayers and taxpayers. We are going to do everything we can to keep that proposal from passing in the Senate.

Now, I am not, this morning, going to announce a hold on the appointment of Mr. Sell as Deputy Secretary of Energy. In accord with the policy that I and Senator GRASSLEY have led the Senate on over the years, I do announce my holds publicly; and unless something changes, unless the administration drops this misguided concept—a concept that would be so punitive on our region at a time when we have very high unemployment and a world of economic hurt throughout our region—unless the administration drops their proposal, I will be forced to come back to this floor and have a public hold placed on the Sell nomination.

I remain very troubled by Mr. Sell's role in the discussions that took place in my office and Dr. Bodman's testimony before the Energy Committee when I was assured in both instances that there was opposition to privatization. I and other Members of the northwest congressional delegation are simply not going to let a sign be put up on the Pacific Northwest saying: Closed for business and energy tax hikes headed through the roof. This is too important to our area.

I am very hopeful that, working with colleagues—and I am particularly in-

terested in working with my good friend, the chairman of the committee, Senator DOMENICI—we can resolve this matter out so our region will not be devastated economically.

Senator DOMENICI, to his credit, has raised concerns about this misguided proposal to raise our energy prices in the Northwest. I intend to work closely with him, and I am very hopeful I will not have to come back to this floor and put a public hold on Mr. Sell's nomination to be Deputy Secretary of Energy. But if this is not worked out and it is not worked out quickly, I will have no other option because the ratepayers of our part of the world, at a time when they have experienced enormous economic pain, deserve to know there is not going to be a huge additional rate hike imposed on them and one that would do so much to cripple their hopes and aspirations.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I rise today because my friends in the Minnesota Republican Party have started a petition online urging me to support President Bush's proposal to strengthen Social Security. I want to take this opportunity to assure the people of Minnesota that I would like to strengthen Social Security just as much as anyone else, and if President Bush or anyone presents a proposal that would actually strengthen Social Security, would protect its ability to pay its promised benefits to present and future retirees and other beneficiaries and also create opportunities to provide additional benefits, I will certainly support it.

I have not yet seen a proposal, including that from the President, that would improve upon the present system while continuing its current benefits.

For all the President's fine talk about helping Social Security's financial future, his current fiscal policies, the ones that are in effect right now, are seriously hurting Social Security's future finances and also weakening the financial strength of the entire Federal Government.

It is a mystery to me why the President is so alarmed by the crisis that he says will occur when Social Security starts running deficits at variously said times, such as 2018, 2028, or 2042, when the rest of the Federal Government's budget, everything else besides Social Security, is running enormous deficits for this year, last year, and for every year projected in the future under his proposed budget.

Last year's on-budget deficit was \$567 billion. A deficit of \$588 billion is expected for the current fiscal year, 2005, and almost \$2.5 trillion more in deficits are projected over the following 5 years under the President's proposed budget. That is the real financial crisis the